Vancouver Coastal Health - Coastal Rural Communities

2018 BC Harm Reduction Client Survey

The B.C. Harm Reduction Program administered a survey to harm reduction supply distribution site clients across BC in 2018 to assess regional differences in drug use and inform harm reduction planning and quality improvement.

Who took part in Vancouver Coastal?

- 3 communities
- 3 sites
- 48 participants
- Gibsons
- Powell River
- Squamish

Drug use

Two thirds of respondents identified SMOKING or INHALATION as the preferred method of drug use, while 9% preferred injection, and 5% preferred snorting.

Past week self-reported drug use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Meth</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fentanyl</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crack</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</tbody>
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Potential harms

- Of 20 people that used pipes from harm reduction sites to smoke drugs:
  - 22% used a second-hand pipe when they couldn't find unused smoking equipment

Overdose

- 10% experienced an OPIOID OVERDOSE in the past six months
- 13% experienced a STIMULANT OVERDOSE in the past six months
- 36% witnessed an OPIOID OVERDOSE in the past six months

Keeping safe and harm reduction

- About half of participants owned a Take Home Naloxone kit: two thirds owned a cell phone.
- Of those that injected drugs, 20% had injected at an Overdose Prevention Services site in the past month.
- Of 16 people that had tried to access opioid agonist therapy (OAT) in the past six months, 38% reported difficulties including:
  - prescription stopped due to positive urine test
  - worry about being stigmatized at clinic
  - unable to find a prescribing physician

Self-identified gender

- Female
- Male
- Trans, gender non-conforming, or other

Potential harms

- Of 15 people that injected drugs in the past month:
  - 27% had trouble getting unused needles

Potential harms

- About half of participants reported using drugs alone some of the time. Reasons for using drugs alone included:
  - convenience and comfort;
  - not having anyone else around;
  - not wanting to share drugs; and,
  - not wanting others to know.